

Halibut



Halibut is the largest family of species within the Order of *Pleuronectiforms* (Explore animals, 2024). This study identified 5 species of Halibut, of which two can be found in the North Sea (Explore animals, 2024; ICES, 2024). These species are the Atlantic halibut (*Hippoglossus hippoglossus*) and the Greenland halibut (*Reinhardtius hippoglossoides*) (Explore animals, 2024; ICES, 2024). The species of Halibut that can be found in the North Sea are not considered invasive and are also not categorized as migratory in their behaviour (Explore animals, 2024).

History/ Population trends

The Atlantic halibut has been a highly sought after species for European fishermen, and high fishing intensity has resulted in depletion of stocks in several areas (Glover et al., 2024). Therefore, the capture of Atlantic halibut in Europe has declined from an all-time high of 10 000-15 000 tons in the period 1950 to 1965, to less than 2 000 tons in 2004 (Glover et al., 2024)). In 2004, the main countries fishing for Atlantic halibut were Norway (1,034 tons), Iceland (574 tons), Faeroe Islands (497 tons), and United Kingdom (251 tons) (Glover et al., 2024). Furthermore, experimental aquaculture of Atlantic halibut was initiated in Norway and Iceland in the mid-1980s (Glover et al., 2024) However, it was not before the late 1990s that significant commercial production was realized (Glover et al., 2024). Whilst yearly production fluctuated in the period 1998-2005, there has been a general increase, and at present approximately 1.000 tons is produced by aquaculture on a yearly basis within Europe (Glover et al., 2024). It is likely that within the next decade, aquaculture production of Atlantic halibut will overtake wild capture (Glover et al., 2024).

Greenland halibut have declined significantly in population size during 1980s and stabilized afterwards (ICES, 2024). The total catch of this year lies between 20.000 tons and 35.000 tons, for the areas that includes the North Sea (ICES, 2024).

Miscellaneous

- The largest species of flatfish is the Atlantic Halibut (*Hippoglossus hippoglossus*) (Largest flatfish, 2022). Atlantic Halibut can reach a size of 4.7m in length and females of the species can weigh up to 320kg, within a lifespan of 50 years (Largest flatfish, 2022). However, Age is not as much of a determining factor as food availability is (Largest flatfish, 2022).
- Greenland is a lot smaller than the Atlantic halibut. According to Godø and Haug, Greenland halibut reach a maximum length of 105cm (1989).

Diet

- Crustaceans (Dwyer et al., 2010; Kohler, 1967)
- Squid (Dwyer et al., 2010; Kohler, 1967)
- Annelida (Dwyer et al., 2010; Kohler, 1967)
- Sandeel (Dwyer et al., 2010; Kohler, 1967)
- Sprat (Dwyer et al., 2010; Kohler, 1967)
- Capelin (Dwyer et al., 2010; Kohler, 1967)
- Other flatfish (Dwyer et al., 2010; Kohler, 1967)
- Whiting (Dwyer et al., 2010; Kohler, 1967)
- Other pelagic active hunters (Dwyer et al., 2010; Kohler, 1967)
- Other demersal active hunters (Dwyer et al., 2010; Kohler, 1967)
- Other ambush hunters (Dwyer et al., 2010; Kohler, 1967)
- Cannibalism (Dwyer et al., 2010; Kohler, 1967)

Sources

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